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1979 BIRTH

NEW JERSEY STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
HEALTH PLANNING AND RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT
HEALTH DATA SERVICES
VS10 - 8104

BIRTH DATA INDEX

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INTRODUCTION

This report is the first in a new series of annual birth statistics publications. Statistics for all municipalities and data not previously available, such as newborns' Apgar scores, education of mothers, and previous number of pregnancy terminations, are included in the report for the first time.

The tables have been changed in content and format from previous publications to facilitate more rapid reproduction and distribution of the data as it becomes available. Data presented in the tables was selected to provide a profile of the natural population increase as well as highlight important information concerning newborn health and contributing maternal factors.

This edition of the annual birth statistics report is part of an extended series of separate publications of similar format on deaths, marriages, abortions, and morbidity. It is hoped that the user will find the new format more informative and easier to reference.

Statistics provided in this publication are data summarized from items reported on birth certificates and filed with the New Jersey State Registrar. New Jersey vital statistics legislation requires that within 5 days of birth the attending physician, midwife, or person acting as midwife, file a birth certificate with the local registrar to be submitted to the State Registrar. Births to New Jersey residents occurring in other states are recorded in the state of occurrence, and forwarded to the New Jersey State Registrar. All individual identifiers are removed prior to tabulation of data for statistical purposes.

OVERVIEW

In 1979, there were 95,672 resident births in New Jersey, the highest annual total since 1972. Births were up 2.5 percent from the final number recorded for 1978 but the increase in New Jersey was less than the 4.0 percent growth for the nation as a whole.

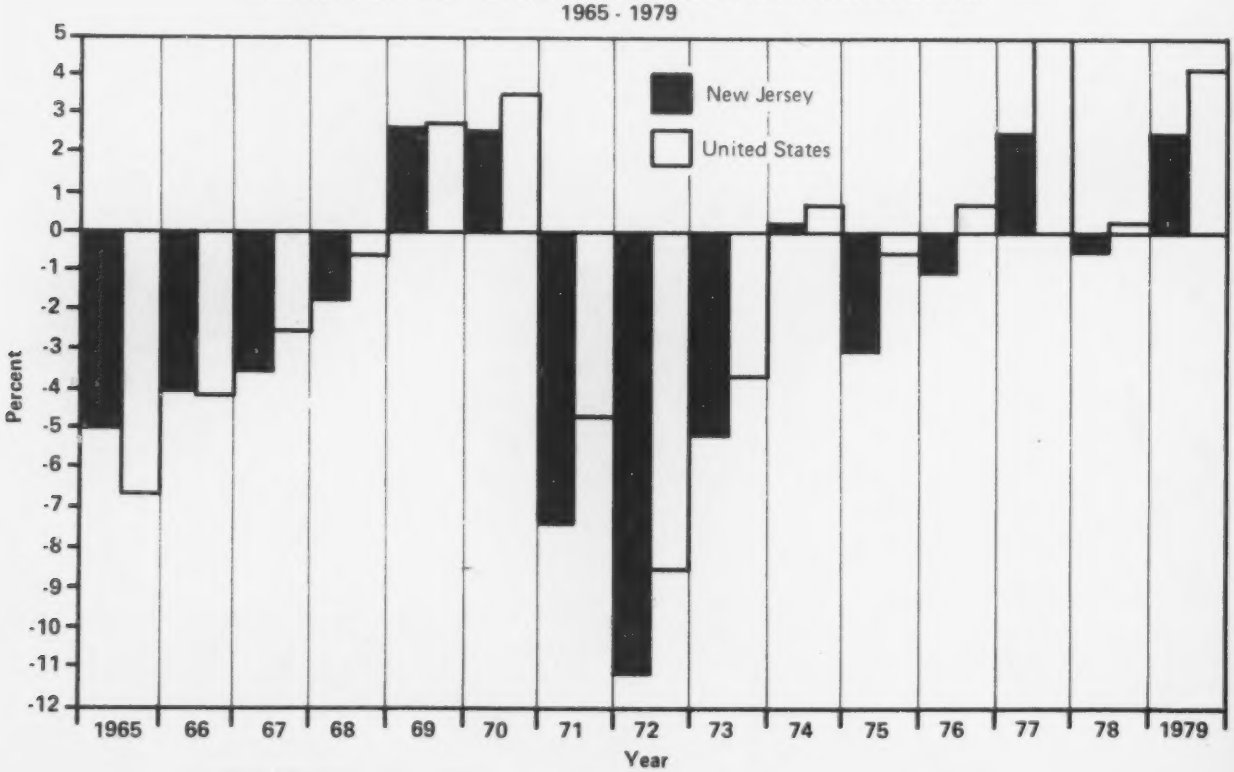
The fertility rate, the number of births per 1,000 women 15-44 years of age, is an important measure of changes in childbearing patterns. The fertility rate for New Jersey increased from 58.6 in 1978 to 60.2 live births per 1,000 women of childbearing age (15-44 years) in 1979. Nationally, the fertillity rate was 68.0 up from 66.6 in 1978.

Fertility rates vary significantly for maternal groups defined by race or age. In New Jersey the fertility rate was 85.2 for nonwhite women and 54.5 for white women. By age group, the total rate was highest for women aged 25-34 years, 95.4, and showed an over-the-year increase of 2.6 points. When age-specific fertility rates were examined within racial groups, different patterns emerged. Among white women the age-specific rate increased in all age groups. For nonwhite women, the rate declined for those under 25 years of age and increased for those 25 years of age and over.

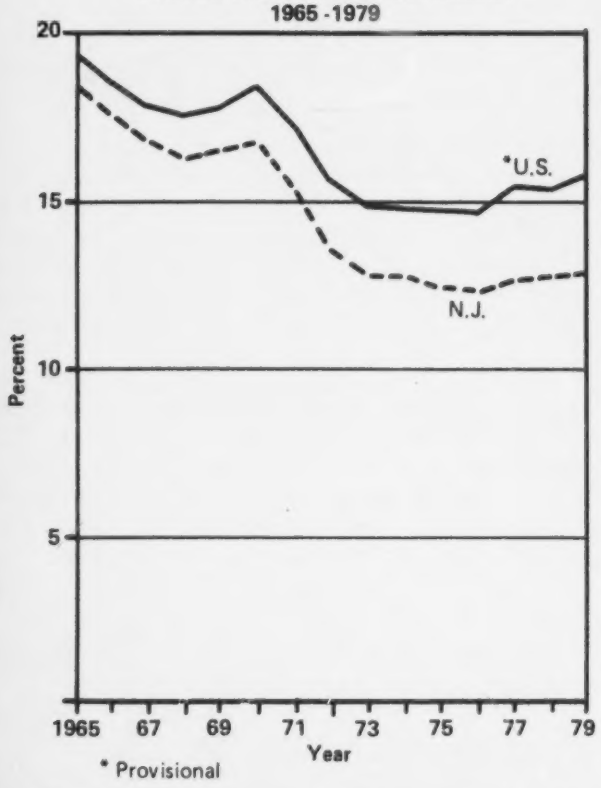
The birth rate, the number of births per 1,000 population, measures population increase. The state's birth rate increased from 12.7 in 1978 to 13.0 births per 1,000 population in 1979, the highest level since 1972. The rate for the nonwhite population, 21.8 per 1,000, was nearly twice that recorded for the white population - 11.5.

All counties except Burlington, Essex, and Warren showed increases in 1979 over 1978. The largest over-the-year increase (2.2) occurred in Salem County. Passaic (1.1), Mercer (0.9), and Hunterdon (0.8) Counties also registered substantial birth rate increases.

PERCENT CHANGE IN NUMBER OF BIRTHS FROM PREVIOUS YEAR
1965 - 1979



BIRTH RATE
UNITED STATES AND NEW JERSEY
1965 - 1979



* Provisional

Of total births, more than one in five, 19,411, were born to unwed women. Legitimacy of the child was unknown for 35 births. For white women, the percentage of total births illegitimate was 10.7, while for nonwhite women the percentage was 56.4. Since 1969, the illegitimate portion of total resident births has increased from 9.5 percent to 20.3 percent.

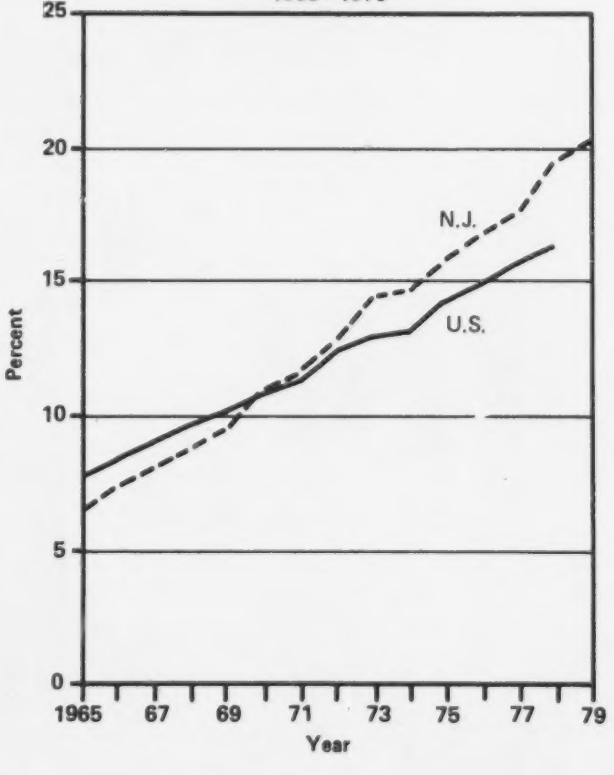
Incidence of births out-of-wedlock decreased as the age of the mother increased. For mothers aged 15-19, 65.3 percent of all births were illegitimate. In the 20-24 year maternal age group, the illegitimacy rate dropped to 26.2 percent. Less than eight percent of births to mothers 25 years of age and older were illegitimate. Out-of- wedlock births to women in the 15-19 age group accounted for 39.8 percent of all illegitimate births. Of these 37.7 percent were born to white women and 62.0 percent to nonwhite women.

Sussex County registered the highest birth rate (16.6) and Bergen County the lowest (9.7). Three southern counties, Salem (15.8), Cumberland (15.5), and Camden (15.2), registered the highest birth rates after Sussex County. Other counties with birth rates above the State average of 13.0 were Hudson (15.1), Essex (14.6), Gloucester (14.4), Ocean (13.6), Atlantic (13.4), and Mercer (13.2).

Among New Jersey's major cities, with population of 50,000 or more, Camden had the highest birth rate (25.0). Trenton (19.9) and Newark (19.7) ranked second and third. Of all major cities, only Newark registered a lower birth rate in 1979 than the previous year.

In 1979, 73,534 births were reported as white and 20,373 as nonwhite. Births of unknown race numbered 1,765. Nonwhite births comprised 21.3 percent of total births. White births increased 2.6 percent while nonwhite births increased 1.2 percent from the previous year.

PERCENTAGE OF BIRTHS ILLEGITIMATE
UNITED STATES AND NEW JERSEY
1965 - 1979



NEWBORN HEALTH

Birthweight

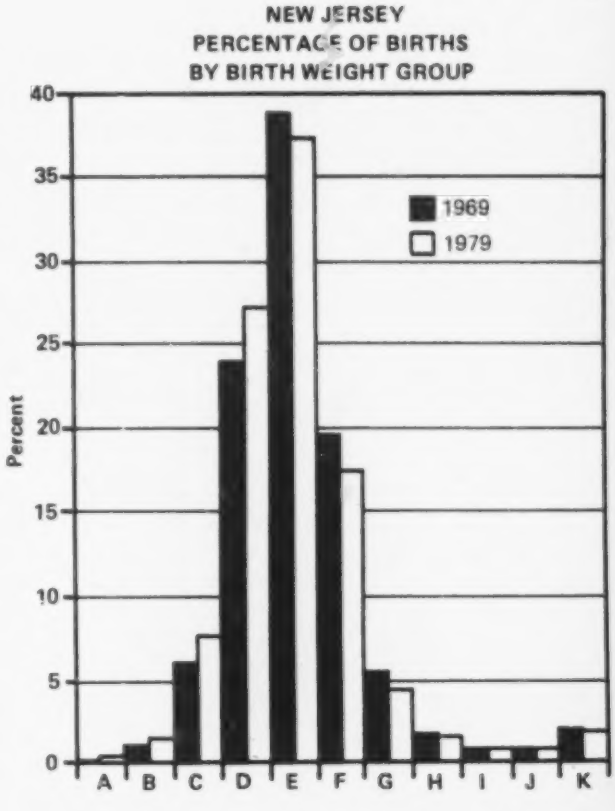
The median weight for newborns in New Jersey was between 6 lbs. 10 ozs. and 7 lbs. 11 ozs. Of all newborns, 37.3 percent were in this weight group. Approximately two-thirds, 64.5 percent, of newborns weighed bebween 6 lbs. 10 ozs. and 8lbs. 13 ozs. The median weight group for newborns has not changed during the last decade and the percentage of newborns in the median weight group has declined only slightly.

Immature, or low birthweight newborns are defined as those weighing 5 lbs. 8 ozs. (2500 grams) or less. Of births in 1979, 6,854, or 7.2 percent, were immature, slightly less than the 6,880 reported in 1978. The decline of immature births during the year occurred in both the white and nonwhite populations. White births weighing less than 5 lbs. 8 ozs. numbered 4,207, 5.7 percent of all white births, while nonwhite births in the underweight categories numbered 2,647 or 12.9 percent of all nonwhite births.

Births to young mothers under 20 years of age are more likely to be immature. A total of 11.2 percent of births to teenage mothers were immature, numbering 1,355 in 1979. Among nonwhite teenage mothers, the occurrence of births underweight was higher than for all teenage mothers and was twice as high as that for all births. Among nonwhite teenage mothers, 14.3 percent, 781 births, were underweight.

The low birth weight rate has been decreasing over the past decade. In 1969, 8.1 percent of all births were underweight. By 1979 that weight group has been reduced to 7.2 percent of all births. Among teenagers, however, the decline in underweight births has not paced the decline for all mothers. While the percentage of low birthweight newborns declined by 0.9 points for the total population, it declined 0.6 points for teenage mothers.

The relationship between birthweight and previous pregnancy terminations was examined for the first time in 1979 and the data show a positive correlation between previous number of pregnancy terminations and low birthweight



for subsequent births. Incidence of low birthweight increased for women who have terminated one or more previous pregnancies. Among mothers who had one previous pregnancy termination, the incidence of low birthweight was 0.6 percentage points higher than for mothers who had never terminated a pregnancy. For each additional previous pregnancy termination of the mother, the incidence of low birthweight increased from a low of 2.5 to a high of 6.0 percentage points.

Number of Previous Pregnancy Terminations	Percent of Births Immature (2500 gr.)
0	7.0
1	7.6
2	10.1
3	12.6
> 3	18.6

There was a positive relationship between birthweight and length of prenatal care history. Low birthweight infants were born less frequently to mothers who began prenatal care in the first trimester of pregancy. The rate among this group was 6.4 percent of reported births. The percentage of immature births among mothers starting care during the second trimester, of pregnancy was 8.9 percent, and among those beginning care in the third trimester, 9.2 percent. Those receiving no prenatal care gave birth to low birthweight infants in over one of five cases (22.1 percent).

Apgar Score

The APGAR Score is a composite measure used to evaluate the newborn infant's general condition. The APGAR Scores are given to newborns at one and five minutes after birth. Heart rate, respiratory effort, color, muscle tone, and reflexes are checked and evaluated. Each factor receives a score of 0, 1, or 2 and the sum of the five values is the overall score. A score of 10 is optimum. Newborns with scores less than 7 are considered distressed and are observed more closely for physical problems during the first days of life. There is a significant relationship between APGAR Score and birthweight, neonatal mortality, and neurological morbidity

Nearly one-half (45.7 percent) of all newborns in 1979 received five-minute APGAR Scores of 10. Of total births 93.5 percent were in the 7-10 APGAR Score range. Low APGAR Scores for newborns of nonwhite mothers were a more frequent occurrence than for newborns of white mothers. Among nonwhite births, 2.9 percent had scores less than 7. Only 1.3 percent of white births were in this low score range. When matched with age of mother, low APGAR Score births were at the highest rate for teenage mothers and for mothers aged 35 and over. Among births to mothers aged 19 years and under, 2.2 percent had low APGAR Scores, the same percentage as that for women aged 35-44. The percentage of newborns with low scores was 1.5 percent for mothers aged 20-34.

Low APGAR Score births occurred less frequently to mothers who received prenatal care. Of births among women beginning prenatal care during their pregnancies, 1.6 percent were in the 0-6 score range. Six percent of births to mothers receiving no prenatal care were low-score.

MATERNAL FACTORS

Age

In 1979, approximately one-third of births, 31,428, were born to women in the 25-29 year age group. Of all births, 28.5 percent, 27,243, were to mothers aged 20-24 years; 12.6 percent, 12,097, were to mothers aged 19 years or less; and 6.0 percent, 5,742, were to mothers 35 years and older.

The past decade has seen a change in childbearing patterns with a shift to more births occurring after age 25. Since 1969, the percentage of births to women 24 years and under has declined while births to women 25 years and over has increased. In the under age 25 maternal group, the proportion of total births declined from 46.0 to 41.1 percent. The largest proportional increase has been to women in the 30-34 age group. Births in this maternal age group increased from 14.4 percent of the total in 1969 to 20.0 percent of the total in 1979. Births to women aged 35 years and over decreased over the past decade from 8.3 percent in 1969 to 6.0 percent in 1979. Births to teenage mothers showed little change during the past ten years, rising slightly from 12.2 percent in 1969 to 12.6 percent of total births in 1979.

Race

Of total births, 76.9 percent were to white mothers and 21.3 percent were to nonwhite mothers. The total percentage of births to nonwhite women has increased 1.1 percentage points from 20.2 in 1972, while the portion of births to white mothers has declined 2.9 points from 79.8 during the same period.

Prenatal Care History

There were 933,069 visits for prenatal care, approximately 9.8 visits per patient, a slight drop from 10.1 visits per patient in 1978. Of all women reporting prenatal care histories, 75.7 percent began care in the first trimester of pregnancy, a 2.2 percentage point drop from the previous year. Only 4.7 percent failed to receive care before the third trimester. Approximately 1.2 percent did not receive any prenatal care.

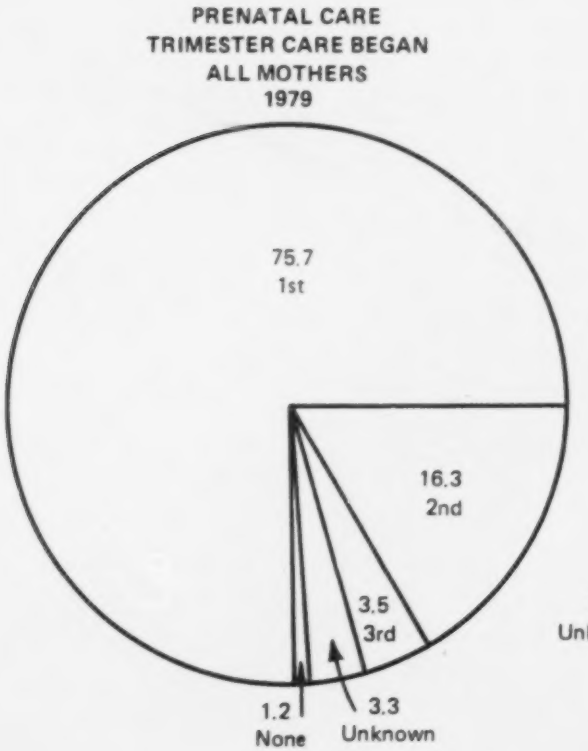
More white mothers began prenatal care in the first trimester than nonwhite mothers, and fewer white mothers completed their pregnancies without any prenatal care. Of white mothers, 81.6 percent sought first trimester care, while among nonwhite mothers the percentage was 60.5 percent. Only 0.6 percent of white mothers did not receive any prenatal care while 3.7 percent of nonwhite mothers did not receive medical care for the duration of their pregnancies. Care for all age-race groups was lowest for nonwhite teenagers with only 45.9 percent receiving first trimester care.

First trimester care was least for mothers aged 19 years and under. Less than one-half of the mothers in this age group, 5,885, had prenatal care from the first trimester of pregnancy. Of teenage mothers 13.0 percent did not receive prenatal care before the third trimester of pregnancy and 3.8 percent did not receive any prenatal care. Attention to prenatal care increase with maternal age. First trimester care was received by 71.4 percent of the mothers aged 20-24 and 83.7 percent of the mothers aged 25 years and over.

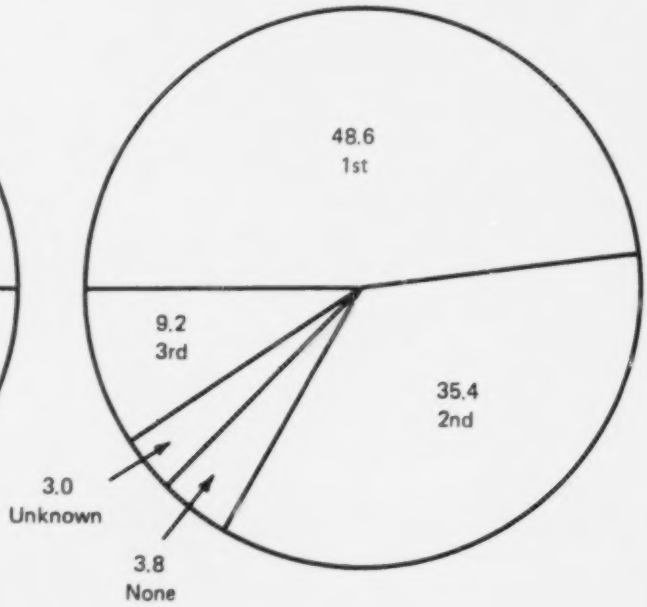
Educational Trends

Educational level was reported on 93.9 percent of birth certificates. Data show that nearly three-fourths (72.7%) of mothers were high school graduates and 16.3 percent were college graduates.

There is an inverse relationship between family size and educational attainment of the mother. Among those who completed high school without further education, 41.4 percent had no previous live births, 33.9 percent had one, 16.1 percent had two, 5.4 percent had three, and 3.0 percent had more than three. For mothers



PRENATAL CARE
TRIMESTER CARE BEGAN
ALL MOTHERS
1979



PRENATAL CARE
TRIMESTER CARE BEGAN
MOTHERS AGED 19 YEARS AND UNDER
1979

with some college, and mothers who graduated college, the number with two or more previous live births was lower. For those with some college, 14.3 percent had two previous live births, 4.9 percent had three, and 2.4 percent had more than three. Mothers who had not earned a high school diploma had the largest number of previous live births. Mothers in this group gave birth to 21.2 percent of all newborns, but comprised nearly 31.8 percent of mothers with three previous live births and almost 44.8 percent of those with more than three previous live births.

Attendant At Birth

Of all births, 98.1 percent (93,855), were attended by a physician. Approximately 98.7 percent of white births, 95.7 percent of black births, and 99.6 percent of other births were physician attended. Midwives attended 1.6 percent of all births. Of the 1,562 midwife-attended births, 823 were white, and 732 were black and three were other races. Midwife attendance occurred at 1.1 percent of the white births and 3.9 percent of the black births and 0.2 percent of other births.

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